GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:226
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2001
FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN
AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA;GANGASANDRA SIDDAPPA BASAVARAJ

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been included in the list of 21 countries to discuss the future political set up in Afghanistan;

(b)if so, the details thereof;

(c)whether India has so far played only a symbolic role in Afghanistan affairs;

(d)if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Northern Alliance enjoys the support of India;

(f)if so, the likely impact thereof on Indo-Afghanistan relations;

(g) whether Russia has sought the cooperation of India for the formation of a broad based multi-ethnic Post-Taliban Government in Afghanistan; and

(h) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a)-(h) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a)-(h) OF THE ANSWERTO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.226 T
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India has been a member of the UN convened Group of 21 countries on Afghanistan since its inception in November, 1996. The group has held several meetings since then and the latest was held in New York on 16th November, 2001. The group discussed the evolving political and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.
India has had traditional and historical ties of friendship and cooperation with Afghanistan. At various periods India-Afghan relations were extensive and covered several areas of political, economic, technical and cultural cooperation. India did not recognise the Taliban or its regime in Afghanistan. We have been extending humanitarian and other assistance and diplomatic support to Northern Alliance, which has had favourable impact on developments in Afghanistan and India-Afghanistan relations, including at people-to-people level.

During the years that the Taliban regime occupied the territories of Afghanistan, as well as in the current context, the Government has been in touch with a large number of coun tries that take an interest in Afghan affairs. We have established regular interaction with several countries, including Russia and the US to address the situation in Afghanistan.It is generally agreed that for peace and stability to return to Afghanistan, it was essential to ensure the establishment of a borad-based independent government with representation from all enthnic groups. We have also participated in several multilateral efforts aimed at restoration of peace, stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan.